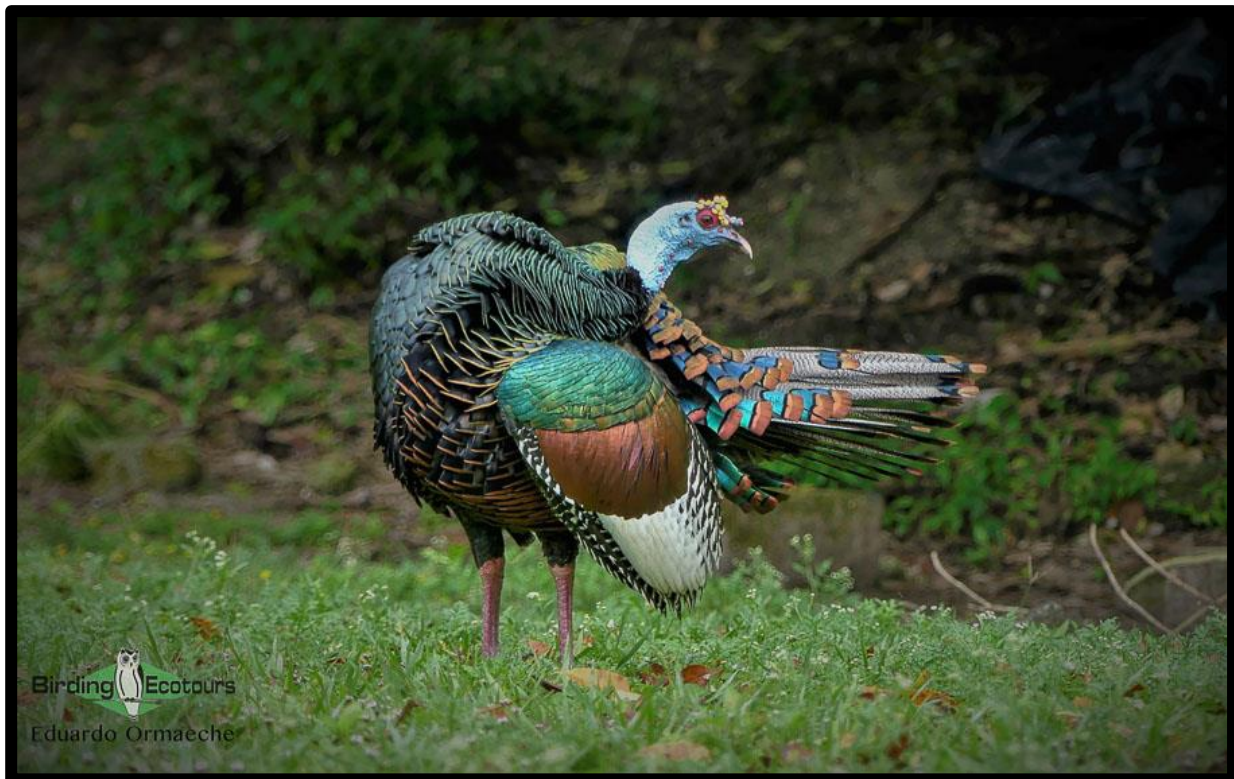




GUATEMALA: TIKAL AND MAYAN RAINFOREST HIGHLIGHTS

12–19 MARCH 2024



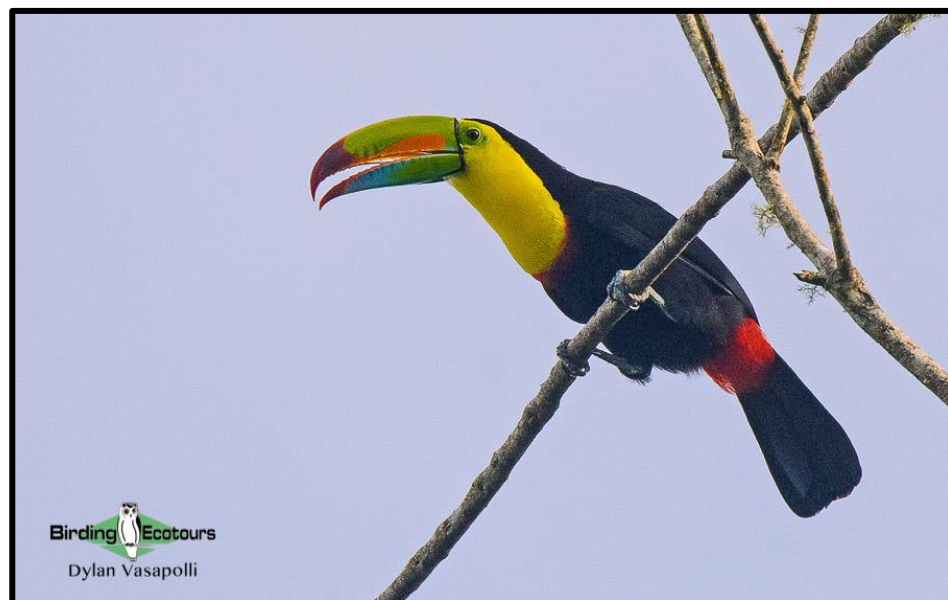
Ocellated Turkey is reliable around the Tikal ruins.

Come join us in the fascinating Central American country of Guatemala as we combine antiquities and birding, exploring the temples of Tikal and birding in Mayan rainforests. Guatemala is an easy country to travel in and has the added appeal of being just a short flight away from North America. Furthermore, this Guatemala birding tour can work well as an introduction to birding in the neotropics.

Northeast Guatemala and the department of Petén holds two main tourist destinations, Laguna del Tigre National Park and Tikal National Park. Laguna Del Tigre National Park covers 1,300 square miles (3,300 square kilometers) making it the largest national park in Guatemala and the largest protected wetland in Central America. This amazing RAMSAR site is Guatemala's last refuge of the declining **Scarlet Macaw**. The fabulous forests and rivers here are home to plenty of special birds including the likes of **Agami** and **Boat-billed Herons**, **Ruddy Crake**, **Thicket Tinamou**, **Northern Potoo**, **Sungrebe**, **Lovely Cotinga** and localized species such **Yucatan Woodpecker** and **Yucatan Jay**. We will spend three nights within the park exploring the rainforest and looking for as many birds as possible and, with luck, we may encounter shy wildlife such as **Jaguar** or **Puma**, which still occur in these remote forests.

Tikal National Park covers 223 square miles (576 square kilometers) and is one of the finest archaeological examples of Mayan architecture. It is a complex of temples, buildings and pyramids from the classic Mayan period 200-850 AD and today is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tikal is surrounded by a beautiful and lush rainforest that provides a unique birding experience with specials such as **Ocellated Turkey**, **Grey-throated Chat**, **Northern Barred Woodcreeper**, **Yucatan Flycatcher**, **Yucatan Poorwill**, **Mayan Anthrush**, **Pale-billed Woodpecker**, **Keel-billed Toucan**, **Northern Mealy** and **Red-lored Amazons**. Tikal is also one of the best places to look for the most-wanted **Orange-breasted Falcon**.

We invite you to join us on our comprehensive Guatemala: Tikal and Mayan Rainforest Highlights tour for a wonderful birding and cultural experience which can also be combined with our preceding Guatemala itinerary.



Keel-billed Toucan is abundant in the Tikal National Park.

Itinerary (8 days/7 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Guatemala City

Today is an arrival day and upon arriving in Guatemala City, you will be transferred to the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel Barcelo

Day 2. Flight to Flores and transfer to Las Guacamayas Biological Station

We will have a domestic flight to Flores in northeast Guatemala, and be met by our ground crew to start our 4x4 drive to San Pedro River. The wetlands and pastures along the drive provide a good selection of introductory species such as **Northern Jacana**, **Purple Gallinule**, **Sora** (some luck required), **American Coot**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Wood Stork**, **Snail Kite**, **Belted, Ringed, Green and Amazon Kingfishers**, **Fork-tailed** and **Vermilion Flycatchers**, **Eastern Meadowlark**, **Morelet's Seedeater**, **Blue Ground Dove**, **Olive-throated Parakeet**, **Mangrove Swallow**, **Bronzed Cowbird**, and **Yellow-faced Grassquit**. On arriving at the river, we will take the boat for a ride along the San Pedro River to the Las Guacamayas Biological Station which is part of the Laguna del Tigre National Park. From the boat it is possible to see **Great Blue** and **Little Blue Herons**, **Anhinga**, **Neotropic Cormorant**, **Keel-billed Toucan** and **Pale-vented Pigeon**. Once at the station we will get lunch and check the hummingbird feeders to tick the first **Wedge-tailed Sabrewing**, **White-bellied Emerald**, **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird**, and **Green-breasted Mango**.



Scarlet Macaw seen at Las Guacamayas station.

An evening boat ride along small tributaries may provide the most-wanted **Agami Heron** and **Boat-billed Heron**, and perhaps our first **Scarlet Macaw**. **Black-and-white** and **Mottled Owls** may be seen around the station at dusk.

Overnight: Las Guacamayas Biological Station



Agami Heron can be seen at Las Guacamayas Biological Station.

Day 3. Waka Peru Trail and Sarluc River boat cruise

Today we will have a full-morning hike through the rainforest on the Waka Peru Trail to enjoy some fine forest birding. Some of the special birds we can see include **Ruddy**, **Ivory-billed**, and **Olivaceous Woodcreepers**, **Barred Antshrike**, **Pale-billed**, **Chestnut-colored**, and **Velasquez's Woodpeckers**, **Tody Motmot**, **Crested Guan**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Black-headed Trogon**, **White-whiskered Puffbird**, **White-collared** and **Red-capped Manakins**, **Stub-tailed Spadebill**, **Northern Bentbill**, **Mangrove Vireo**, **Spot-breasted** and **White-bellied Wrens**, **Grey Catbird**, **Grey-headed Tanager**, and **Scarlet Macaw**. Other parrot species we are likely to see include **White-crowned** and **Brown-hooded Parrots** and **Red-lored Amazon**. If we are lucky, **Northern Potoo**, at a daytime roost, as well as uncommon species such as **Yucatan Jay** and the shy **Thicket Tinamou** and **Great Curassow**.

Geoffroy's Spider Monkeys may be encountered anywhere around the station while the habitat around the cabins hosts **Plain Chachalaca**, **Green-backed Sparrow**, **Blue Bunting** and **White-eyed Vireo**. In the afternoon, we will take a boat ride along the Sarluc River to look for specials such as **Yucatan Woodpecker** and **Sungrebe**. Additionally, Las Guacamayas provides excellent chances for the secretive **Ruddy Crake**.

Overnight: Las Guacamayas Biological Station

Day 4. Las Guacamayas Station

We have another full day around Las Guacamayas, starting with an early morning birding session from the canopy platform, where it is possible to get species such as **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **Bright-rumped Attila**, **King Vulture**, **Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle**, **White-necked Puffbird**, **Scaled Pigeon**, **Brown Jay**, **Masked Tityra**, **Trilling Gnatwren**, **Blue-grey Gnatcatcher**, **Red-lore Amazon**, **Scarlet Macaw**, **Squirrel Cuckoo** and, if we are lucky, the rare **Lovely Cotinga**. We will then spend the afternoon birding in the nearby forests, for any species we are still missing. While at Las Guacamayas, we may encounter other wildlife such as **Central American Agouti**, the localized **Morelet's Crocodile**, **Common Green Iguana**, and **Geoffroy's Spider Monkey**.

Overnight: Las Guacamayas Biological Station

Day 5. Transfer to Flores and exploring Yaxhá National Park

We will leave Las Guacamayas after three incredible days of birding and exploring Laguna del Tigre National Park and then return to Flores to head to Yaxhá National Park. This less-frequently visited national park protects antiquities from the Maya Classic Period (from around 800 BC) and is a monumental site that includes pyramids, temples, and buildings, surrounded by lush rainforest and bordered by Yaxhá Lake. We will enjoy a wonderful birding afternoon looking for the likes of **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Yucatan Flycatcher**, **Lesser Greenlet**, **Red-throated Ant Tanager**, **Pheasant Cuckoo**, **Collared Aracari**, **Tawny-winged Woodcreeper**, **Northern Schiffornis**, **Mayan Antthrush**, **Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet**, **White-breasted Wood Wren**, **Dot-winged Antwren** and **Swallow-tailed Kite**. We will spend a night in the charming Sombrero Lodge, right on the edge of the national park.

Overnight: Sombrero Lodge



Tikal temples surrounded by Central American rainforest.

Day 6. Yaxhá and transfer to the Tikal National Park

We will spend a whole morning birding Yaxhá, looking for the localized **Grey-throated Chat** and will then transfer to the Tikal National Park to stay at the Jungle Lodge.

Along the way to the lodge, we might spot our first **Ocellated Turkey**. We will then spend the afternoon birding around the lodge, outside of the archaeological site. We will be on the lookout for **Yucatan** and **Ochre-bellied Flycatchers**, **Montezuma Oropendola**, **Sulphur-rumped Myiobius**, **Short-billed Pigeon**, **Plain Antvireo**, **Plain Xenops**, **Stripe-throated Hermit**, **Black-headed Saltator** and **Yellow-winged Tanager**. There is normally an excellent set of North American migratory species in the Petén area, and throughout the tour in general, and we may find **Hooded**, **Tennessee**, **Magnolia**, **Black-and-white**, **Kentucky**, **Wilson's**, **Chestnut-sided**, and **Worm-eating Warblers**, **Northern Waterthrush**, and **Ovenbird**. Further migrants include **Baltimore** and **Orchard Orioles**, **Wood Thrush**, and **Philadelphia Vireo**.

Overnight: Jungle Lodge



An impressive sunrise in Tikal National Park (photo Miguel Marin).

Day 7. Tikal National Park and Temple IV sunset view

We will spend the full day admiring the Tikal pyramids and archaeological sites. Birding around Tikal provides unique encounters with forest species such as **Ocellated Turkey**, **Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser**, **Tawny-crowned Greenlet**, **Dusky Antbird**, **Green Honeycreeper**, **Rufous Piha**, **Ruddy Quail-Dove**, **Northern Royal Flycatcher**, **Barred Forest Falcon**, **Brown-hooded Parrot**, **Red-lored Amazon**, **Slaty-tailed Trogon**, **Pheasant Cuckoo**, **Mayan Antthrush**, **Rufous Mourner**, **White-bellied Wren**, **Ruddy** and **Northern Barred Woodcreepers**, **Rose-throated Becard**, **Plumbeous Kite**, and **Pale-billed Woodpecker**.

We will climb to the top of Temple IV to get a breath-taking view of the forest and sunset and in particular, to look for the most-wanted **Orange-breasted Falcon**, which is normally reliable here.

Overnight: Jungle Lodge

Day 8. Birding Tikal and transfer to Flores to catch domestic flight to Guatemala City

We will have a predawn start to look for the localized **Yucatan Poorwill**, and have a last morning's birding around the old airfield near Tikal. We will then return to the lodge to be transferred back to Flores and catch a 3 pm flight back to Guatemala City. We will arrive back in Guatemala City to connect with our international flights back home.

Duration:	8 days
Group Size:	4–8
Dates:	12 – 19 March 2024
Start:	Guatemala City, Guatemala
End:	Guatemala City, Guatemala
Prices:	US\$ 4,317 per person sharing – based on 4-8 participants (2024)
Single Supplements:	US\$ 210 (2024)

Price includes:

All accommodation
All meals (except when indicated)
Land transportation
River transportation
Private English speaking tour leader
Admission fees
Local guides
Transfer from the airport to the hotel on Day 1
Water

Price excludes:

Hotel in Guatemala City on Day 8
Dinner in Guatemala City on Day 8
Personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls, internet access, room service, etc.
Personal beverages and alcoholic drinks
Domestic flights from Guatemala/Petén/Guatemala (around US\$310, we can help you purchase your flight ticket)